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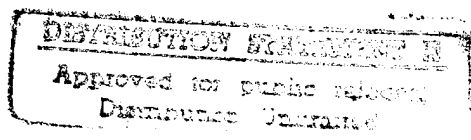
NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, Rhode Island

DEFINING OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A Grass-Roots Approach

Submitted by:  
Major Charles J. Bartlett, USAF

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and  
are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.



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14 June 1996

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## ABSTRACT

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by

Major Charles J. Bartlett, USAF

Operational leadership is often narrowly viewed as simply the employment of large military units in a theater of operations. With this shallow understanding of operational leadership, most people are more comfortable describing it in terms of what makes it unique to other "types" of leadership. This study prefers to take a "grass-roots" approach, building a foundation from which conclusions may be drawn as opposed to skirting the issue peripherally.

This paper fuses military leadership with the embryonic concept of operational art to define operational leadership. In order to better frame this discussion, a World War II example is presented. General Carl "Tooe" Spaatz, as the U.S. Strategic Air Forces commander, provides an excellent model in viewing the application of military leadership at the operational level.

The conclusions of this paper suggest that there are fundamental principles which are common to all leadership situations. Principally, that leadership traits are universal and every leader must focus on four primary factors: the mission, the people, the leader, and the environment. In so doing, his leadership style will vary with each situation. Certain traits will dominate in certain situations while others are more submissive. Therefore, it is the environment and the mission unique, not a formula or certain leadership traits, which make operational leadership. Finally, given the dynamics of situational leadership, operational leadership concerns itself with the management of resources and application of operational art "tools" in a theater of operations.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. PURPOSE**

The focus of this paper is on military leadership applied at the operational level-- operational leadership. The intent is NOT a dissertation on leadership principles nor traits, not even on the responsibilities of an operational commander. Rather, it will discuss issues of military leadership in their relationship to operational art. Simply put, it will focus on the art of leadership as it relates to the conditions imposed in an operational setting.

This study is intended to enhance the understanding of operational leadership for the operational art student. Furthermore, this reading should provide practical and germane insight to better prepare our future commanders for leadership at the operational level.

### **B. BACKGROUND**

"Operational Art" is a fairly new concept, coined around 1980. In the study of warfare, which has its roots back to the time of Sun Tzu circa 500 B.C., one must agree that operational art is merely in its infancy. Given this understanding, very little is written on the subject and few experts have written to any significant level in this area of study. It, therefore, is highly relevant to expand on the idea of operational leadership as an element of this tooth-cutting concept called operational art.

Military leaders must be well-rounded in their study, evaluation, and complete understanding of the basic philosophy and principles of war. Therefore, it is imperative they master the "characteristics, capabilities, advantages, and limitations of the military instrument."

In addition, they must be thoroughly aware of the operational environment to include the potential threat posed by an enemy.<sup>1</sup>

Summarily, the essence of operational leadership is that in its absence, there can be no coordinated action, nor unity of effort. It represents the genius Clausewitz wrote about and Moltke embodied to garner operational success culminating in the attainment of political objectives defined by national security interests. The path that leads to the promulgation of this end is rooted in operational leadership. Retired Major General H. E. Ely, USA, captured the importance of operational leadership, "As always, it will be the army with the best leaders, and therefore, with the most courageous, loyal, and devoted men, that will be victorious."<sup>2</sup>

## II. WHAT IS OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP?

<i>Operational leadership is dependent on two things: leadership competency and understanding operational art.<sup>3</sup></i> - General Vuono
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Before defining operational leadership, one must have a secure grasp of two concepts--military leadership and operational art--exclusively. This is not to suggest that they are mutually exclusive, for certainly they are not. However, by considering each concept independently, a foundation can then be laid from which a better understanding of the interaction between military leadership and operational art may be gained.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Air Force, Air Force Manual 1-1, Volume II, Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force (March 1992), 26.

<sup>2</sup> H. E. Ely, "Moulding Men for Battle," Infantry Journal, 46 (1939): 421.

<sup>3</sup> Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership (31 July 1990), Flyleaf.

## A. WHAT IS MILITARY LEADERSHIP?

*"The beginning of leadership is a battle for the hearts and minds of men....the essence of [military] leadership."*<sup>4</sup>  
- Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein

In most discussions on leadership, it is more common for it to be described rather than defined; it is easier. For instance, there are certain characteristic traits of a leader such as: integrity, loyalty, commitment, energy, decisiveness, and selflessness.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, there are leadership principles like: know your job, know yourself, set the example, care for people, communicate, educate, equip, motivate, accept responsibility, and develop teamwork.<sup>6</sup> Above all, there are primary factors that must be governed in all leadership situations. They are the people, the mission, the leader, and the environment.<sup>7</sup>

In the broader sense, leadership must focus on the accomplishment of a specified goal, task, or mission. To do so, it requires the management of resources--of which an organization's greatest resource is its people--and the manipulation of the conditions in which the organization operates. Above all, careful consideration of these factors enables the leader to select the proper approach to each situation. Clearly, there is no single leadership style which is appropriate in every situation; therefore, effective leaders learn to tailor their leadership style to the mission, people, and the environment.<sup>8</sup> This type of description is rather generic. So, to specify what military leadership is, we need to look at defining it.

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<sup>4</sup> Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, The Path to Leadership, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1961), 10.

<sup>5</sup> Department of the Air Force, Air Force Pamphlet 35-49, Air Force Leadership ( 01 September 1985), 3-7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 7-14.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 14-21.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 23. FM 22-100, 71.

The Army stipulated in 1981 a leadership goal that its leaders were to be "committed to mission accomplishment and well-being of subordinates."<sup>9</sup> This goal identifies the two fundamental components of all common definitions of military leadership--mission and people.<sup>10</sup> Then, for purposes of our discussion, military leadership will be defined as "the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation."<sup>11</sup> With this understanding of military leadership, let's now get a firm handle on operational art.

## **B. WHAT IS OPERATIONAL ART?**

*"These two particular characteristics--simultaneous and successive operations--are in fact the heart of operational art."*

- James J. Schneider

First of all, operational art is far too vast a subject to cover in a few paragraphs. However, a broad-brush look at it should be helpful. Operational art has been set apart from the classical strategy of a single point, perhaps best characterized during the Napoleonic era as concentrated or concentric maneuver, through the evolution of the distributed free maneuver, credited to have given rise during the American Civil War.<sup>12</sup> J.F.C. Fuller's description of General Grant's operational vision during the 1864-1865 campaign embraces the essence of operational art. Fuller wrote: "tak[ing] in at a glance the whole field of the war, to form a correct opinion of every suggested and possible...campaign, their *logical order and sequence, their relative value, and the interdependence of the one upon the other*" (emphasis added).<sup>13</sup> Without (operational)

<sup>9</sup> Faris R. Kirkland, "The Gap Between Leadership Policy and Practice: A Historical Perspective" Parameters (September 1990), 53.

<sup>10</sup> Reference the glossary for five common definitions of (military) leadership.

<sup>11</sup> Field Manual 22-100, 1.

<sup>12</sup> James J. Schneider, "The Loose Marble--and the Origins of Operational Art" Parameters (March 1989), 86-99.

James J. Schneider, "Theoretical Implications of Operational Art" Military Review (September 1990), 20-22.

<sup>13</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, "Lee and Grant," (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), 248-149, 245.



vision, operational art is doomed. Consider the American folly at the Battle for Leyte Gulf in which MacArthur, Nimitz, Halsey, and Kinkaid lacked the vision to adequately integrate and coordinate the Third and Seventh Fleets. With no clear provision for operational leadership and no unity of effort, both Halsey and Kinkaid had “differing conceptions of the other’s mission.”<sup>14</sup>

In the simplest terms, operational art is the link between strategy and tactics. This may seem nebulous and an oversimplification which requires amplification. Therefore, Joint Pub 1-02 defines operational art as “the employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, integration, and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations, and battles. Operational art translates the joint force commander’s strategy into operational design, and ultimately, tactical action, by integrating the key activities of all levels of war.”<sup>15</sup>

Specifically, operational art provides synchronization and sequencing for the application of numerous critical actions at the operational level. For example, the principles of war, centers of gravity, culmination, maneuver, sequencing, synchronization, command and control, intelligence, reconnaissance, logistics, communication, operational fires, and operational protection. This citation is by no means exhaustive of all the necessary actions that make up operational art. Suffice it to say, they represent the “colors” which the operational artist applies to the “canvass.” Perhaps vision is the most critical element in that it formulates the operational design and molds all of these actions into a cohesive and integrated plan appropriate to the theater of operations.

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<sup>14</sup> Elmo B. Potter, *“The Battle for Leyte Gulf,”* Sea-Power: A Naval History (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 781-785.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Defense, Joint Pub 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.

Operational art, then, entails the management and “shaping” of the battlefield through preparation. It deals with the setting of conditions within a theater for success through the manipulation of joint and combined forces at the decisive place and time. This directly implies the planning and training--as well as mobilization, deployment, employment, and sustainment--of military forces .

**C. WHAT IS LEADERSHIP AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL--  
OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP?**

*“[Operational leadership] must be viewed as a center of gravity--the quintessence from which all else flows, the soul that lends wings to the commander's grand design.”<sup>16</sup>*

- Lt Col Werner W. Banisch

It would be trite to conclude that operational leadership is merely the management or mastery of operational art. Yet, some regard operational leadership simply as the mastering of the employment of large forces to attain strategic objectives in a theater.<sup>17</sup> However, this would be an elusive conclusion, for operational leadership is much more than that; yet, it is a component of operational art.

Perhaps the best way to get our hands around the concept of operational leadership is to overlay the military leadership template on the operational level. In so doing, a clear application can be seen of the purpose, direction, and motivation inherent to effective military organizations.

The purpose embodies the necessary notion of communicating the commander's intent, providing a broad vision that links strategic objectives to military objectives. This is accomplished through such products as Operation Orders, Warning Orders, Operation Plans, and the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. Interestingly, communicating the purpose has its roots in a

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<sup>16</sup> Werner W. Banisch, “Leadership at the Operational Level” Army (August 1987), 50.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

Prussian, Friedrich von Steuben. General Washington hired von Steuben to instill discipline and training into the ranks of the Continental Army. Some time later, in a letter to a friend in the German army, Von Steuben wrote, "The genius that is the character or the nature of the American people--the genius of this people is different from ours. In the German army you tell a man to do something and he does it. In the American army, I must first explain the reason why, and then it is done."<sup>18</sup>

The second function of leadership--direction--implies an innate responsibility to: set and enforce standards, set goals, plan, problem solve, supervise and evaluate, and train.<sup>19</sup> Direction may be applied directly or indirectly. Often times, as espoused through Total Quality Management principles, the indirect approach--empowerment--is most effective. It frees commanders from managing the details to provide a focus on the operational design. For example, the synchronization and sequencing of forces, political and media relations, and the appropriateness of the military objectives to strategic goals. The key is to "provide prudent personal control when necessary, while avoiding too much interference with subordinates."<sup>20</sup> Empowerment also yields trust and respect, promotes a sense of subordinate ownership in the unit, which itself generates pride. This leads to the third function--motivation.

Fostering an atmosphere of respect and trust with subordinates equates to focusing on the people in theater and in the organization. Building this trust and respect leads to teamwork, which itself breeds cohesion and esprit de corps. This chain, thereby, provides subordinates the

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<sup>18</sup> Huba Wass de Czege, "A Comprehensive View of Leadership" Military Review (August 1992), 22.

J. Lawton Collins, "Leadership at Higher Echelons" Military Review (May 1990), 42.

<sup>19</sup> Field Manual 22-100, 46. Wass de Czege, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Crosbie E. Saint, "A CINC's View of Operational Art" Military Review (September 1990), 68.

desire to accomplish the mission.<sup>21</sup> When, however, this trust and respect is lost, a barrier is erected which signifies failed or at the least ineffective leadership.

The charter, then, for operational leadership is to “translate broad strategic goals into attainable military objectives in a theater of war ‘through the design, organization and conduct of campaigns and major operations.’”<sup>22</sup> To do this, operational leaders must understand the nature of war and their environment. So, operational leadership can then be considered as the ability to influence or shape the conditions within a theater of operations toward the accomplishment of operational or strategic objectives by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to assigned forces.<sup>23</sup>

Essentially, responsibility rests squarely with operational leadership to answer the four basic questions of operational art:

- What military conditions must be created in order to realize the strategic objective?
- What sequence of events must occur in order to create the required military conditions?
- How should forces and resources be used in order to make the sequence of events happen?
- What degree of risk is acceptable at each stage of the enterprise?

Certainly, conditions at the operational level present unique challenges with inherent risk. Carl von Clausewitz, writing on (the operational level of) war, describes (operational) leadership as a commander acting with boldness.

“The higher the military rank, the greater is the degree to which activity is governed by the mind, by the intellect, by insight....This kind of boldness....is rather a matter of energetically supporting that higher form of analysis by which genius arrives at a decision: rapid, only partly conscious weighing of the possibilities. Boldness can lend wings to

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<sup>21</sup> Field Manual 22-100, 46. Wass de Czege, 24-25.

<sup>22</sup> Banisch, 56.

<sup>23</sup> Generic definition of operational leadership.

intellect and insight; the stronger the wings then, the greater the heights, the wider the view, and the better the results; though a greater prize, of course, involves greater risks.”<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, operational leadership relates directly to the weight and evaluation of risk, the demonstration of boldness, and the necessary vision to ensure the successful accomplishment of the mission.

Before leaving this area, it should be added that operational leadership also entails the responsibility to shape institutional values and command climate. In addition, it must prepare for succession, in other words it is responsible for the development of field grade and junior general officers.<sup>25</sup>

### III. AN OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL: General Carl A. Spaatz

*“I think his [General Spaatz] most outstanding characteristic as a number one leader was that he kept the objective always in front of him and nothing would cause him to divert an inch.”*<sup>26</sup>

- Major General Frank Hunter

In presenting a concept, it is first recommended to offer a definition and then provide examples and/or non-examples. This “concept lesson” is designed to serve as just that, a teaching aid, in this case to better understand what operational leadership is all about. So, having provided a definition of operational leadership, it is time to look at an example. Now examples could be drawn from any era dating back to the American Civil War, perhaps even earlier than that, to our most recent conflicts such as Operation DESERT STORM. Examples also can be cited based on geographical or functional leadership. Very simply, there is a plethora of

<sup>24</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, On War ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 191-192.

<sup>25</sup> Wass de Czege, 29.

<sup>26</sup> Edgar F. Puryear, Jr, Stars in Flight (California: Presidio Press, 1981), 95. Personal communication, October 3, 1962.

examples from all the services. However, being rooted in the American Army Air Corps, I shall examine General Carl "Tooe" Spaatz as a model for operational leadership.<sup>27</sup>

For simplicity, the scope of this look at Spaatz's operational leadership will be constrained to his actions during World War II (WWII). By the time the United States entered WWII, "Spaatz had a set of fixed character traits, firm beliefs, and over three decades' experience as a military aviator."<sup>28</sup> Spaatz, himself describes the essential rooting of technical competence while speaking of (operational) leadership, "The one thing that is necessary is that you know the tools of your trade. In my case, it was knowing the airplane--knowing what the airplane could do at all times."<sup>29</sup>

At this point, some stage-setting is required. First and foremost, Spaatz was well thought of by both his superiors and his subordinates, capturing their trust at every bend. It has been recorded that,

"Eisenhower rated Spaatz and Bradley equally as the two American general officers in the Combined European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operation who rendered the most valuable service in the war against the Germans. Of Spaatz, he commented, *Experienced and able air leader; loyal and cooperative; modest and selfless; always reliable*. His subordinates appreciated him as well. Doolittle said, *...I idolize General Spaatz. He is perhaps the only man that I have ever been closely associated with whom I have never known to make a bad decision.*"<sup>30</sup>

For example, as an observer in London in 1940, Spaatz challenged and rebutted U.S. Ambassador Kennedy's prediction of a German victory announcing the Germans could not win without first gaining air superiority, for which they lacked the fuel and endurance. General Ira

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<sup>27</sup> See Autobiography, p19.

<sup>28</sup> Richard G. Davis. Carl A. Spaatz and the Air War in Europe (Washington, D.C.: Center for Air Force History, 1993), 593.

<sup>29</sup> Puryear, 95. Personal interview, September 19, 1962.

<sup>30</sup> Davis, 592.

Eaker concluded that the "Spaatz prophecy impressed President Roosevelt favorably and endeared Spaatz to British leaders. He was thus a logical and certain choice to head our own air effort in Europe."<sup>31</sup>

Fortunately for the Allies, "Spaatz's experiences in training and operations made him an excellent combat commander. His insistence on thorough training and maximum performance pushed men and machines to their limits in order to exploit all forces made available to him."<sup>32</sup> Given his professional expertise, Spaatz was then able to use it to make the link from U.S. strategy and policy to tactics in the Combined European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operation.

As the commander of the Twelfth Army Air Forces in North Africa, Spaatz made the link from strategic goals to tactics through his insistence on achieving air superiority as an absolute priority.<sup>33</sup> In so doing, the support Spaatz had gained from Eisenhower proved critical in countering RAF arguments, for there was, initially, plenty of friction between the American and British forces in North Africa. Under Spaatz's leadership, he diffused this friction in creating a "new, joint command, Allied Air Forces in North Africa, including the Eastern Air Command under Air Marshall Sir William Welsh, the Twelfth U.S. Army Air Force under Major General Jimmy Doolittle, and units of the French air force." By April 1943, Spaatz had the results he was looking for--Allied air supremacy.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Puryear, 82. Arnold. Global Mission, 192.

<sup>32</sup> Davis, 596.

<sup>33</sup> I. B. Holliey, Jr, "General Carl Spaatz and the Art of Command" Air Leadership ed. Richard H. Kohn and Joseph P. Harahan (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1986), 26.

<sup>34</sup> Puryear. 84.

Later, as the Commander of U.S. Strategic Air Forces (USSTAF), Spaatz had to determine how strategic bombing would be accomplished, what targets would be bombed, and where the bombing would be done. U.S. strategic goals were fused together with the British when the Anglo-American heads of state met in Casablanca on January 21, 1943 and stated the ultimate objective of the Combined Bomber Offensive was to be "the progressive destruction and dislocation of the German military, industrial and economic system, and the undermining of the morale of the German people to a point where their capacity for armed resistance is fatally weakened."<sup>35</sup> Therefore, Spaatz, understanding the strategic goals, was responsible to provide an operational design and make it happen.

It was also settled at the Casablanca Conference that the Combined Bomber Offensive would entail "round the clock" bombing, with the Americans performing daylight precision bombing and the British night area bombing. In challenging Air Marshall Tedder, Spaatz favored targeting German weapon plants, such as ball bearing factories, and their oil refineries as the way to cripple the Wehrmacht--the German center of gravity. He believed the Germans would come up to defend these war production facilities at which time the Luftwaffe would subsequently be defeated delivering air superiority to the Allies.<sup>36</sup> As history bears out, "the oil plan, as all observers recognized, was Spaatz's finest moment. It ruined the Luftwaffe as a viable air force and dashed the weapon of mobility from the hands of the German ground forces."<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Spaatz provided operational protection through his strategic bombing campaign. In

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<sup>35</sup> Robert Frank Futrell, Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine, Volume I (Alabama: Air University Press, 1989),150.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 86-7.

<sup>37</sup> Davis, 596.



fact, he commented, "I think that there were only two or three German planes that appeared during the whole landing in Normandy."<sup>38</sup>

In dealing with the early high loss rate of bombers, Spaatz drove implementation of two sequels: the introduction of the drop fuel tank and a change in fighter tactics. Adding the drop fuel tank to his fighters, extended their range allowing them to escort bombers deep into German territory. The change in tactics further crippled the Luftwaffe. Spaatz and Doolittle believed that air power was inherently offensive, so they pulled the fighters away from the bomber formation and sent them out to pursue and destroy the "Hun."<sup>39</sup>

In all of his leadership positions, Spaatz was an empowerment wizard, heeding the counsel of Moltke: "the demands of the operational commander are such that he must conserve his energy to see the overall picture clearly and not get too immersed in detail."<sup>40</sup> He fervently believed in non-interference, saying "I give a man a job. I never tell him how to do it. He's supposed to know how to do it."<sup>41</sup> With this, Spaatz inspired confidence in his men. General Harold A. Bartron related a personal incident to Spaatz's hands-off approach.

When "the general officer in command of service troops in the Mediterranean theater...had a nervous breakdown and had to be replaced overnight, General Spaatz selected me for the job...He took me to one side, and said, *Bartron, ...This is the toughest job in the theater, he [General Duncan] has just broken down, I hope that you, too, do not break down. You run the job the way you think it should be run; go any place any time you want to go. Take time off and often whenever you like. If you're going to be away from your office for more than three or four days, let me know.*"<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Puryear, 88. Goldberg-Spaatz interview.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 88. Field Marshall Sir Michael Carver, ed. *The War Lords* (Little, Brown, 1976), 570-571.

<sup>40</sup> Michael D. Krause, "Moltke and the Origins of Operational Art," *Military Review* (September 1990), 31-36. (Moltke, *Militanscge Werke*, II, 2, 180-183.)

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 88. Personal communication to Major General Robert E. L. Eaton, April 18, 1963.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 89. Personal communication, October 17, 1962.

Countless other stories could be told to illustrate Spaatz's operational leadership prowess. However, one final note addresses the need to prepare for succession. "He did much for his friends, but he also chose wisely. Spaatz naturally promoted people he knew well, but he also knew them to be competent and capable of handling greater responsibility."<sup>43</sup>

The impact Spaatz had in breaking the back of the Luftwaffe and the German war machine is presented in Appendix A from a historian's point of view. It is generally held that "without Spaatz and his insistence on the oil plan and his devastating campaign against the Luftwaffe before the Normandy invasion, the Allies would still have defeated Nazi Germany. With Spaatz, the Allies defeated Hitler and his henchmen months earlier than they otherwise would have."<sup>44</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION

*"Leadership is intangible, and therefore no weapon ever designed can replace it."*<sup>45</sup>

- General Omar N. Bradley

Today's modern military is armed with a new hybrid of weapon systems and technology. This without a doubt has changed the nature in which warfare is conducted and the application of operational art. The result has been a change in the tools available to the operational leader and how these tools are integrated. However, there is no fundamental change to operational leadership itself. Operational leadership is rooted in relevant principles that bear timeless attributes which are often debated.

Generally, discussions relating to military leadership as it is applied at various levels--strategic, operational, and tactical--and under differing conditions--peacetime or combat--get

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<sup>43</sup> Davis, 594.

<sup>44</sup> Davis, 596.

<sup>45</sup> Field Manual 22-100, 3.

caught up in specific qualities and traits. The utility of this type of discussion, although interesting and sometimes stimulating, bears little fruit. Any forum can agree on certain leadership traits, which frankly are universal. It is simply a matter of some traits being emphasized and others de-emphasized based on a particular situation. Therefore, there is no single formula for military leadership. It must be weighed and applied only after due consideration to four salient factors: the mission, the people, the leader, and the environment. Consequently, the prudent leader will ensure his leadership style is situational and varies in how it is applied. This principle--law of nature--very much governs at the operational level.

It should be observed that there certainly are different responsibilities and requirements of a leader at the operational level, however, it bears repeating, there is no difference in leadership in principle. It is the environment--the theater of operations--and the mission that make operational leadership unique. Moreover, a necessary component of operational leadership is boldness--the acceptance of calculated risk. It is a hallmark of character which can turn a looming disaster into victory.<sup>46</sup>

The capstone, then, of Operational leadership is (operational) vision--the ability to see the desired end state and then plot a path to achieve it. Operational vision in turn leads to battlefield preparation, influencing the theater conditions. A broad perspective must be maintained with a high level of consciousness regarding not only current events, but also anticipated future events within the theater of operations.<sup>47</sup> Fundamentally, this boils down to the planning, training, deployment, employment, and sustainment of joint and combined forces to meet today's diverse operational requirements.

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<sup>46</sup> Banisch, 54.

<sup>47</sup> Milan Vego. "Operatioanl Leadership," an Unpublished Paper. Naval War College, Newport RI: July 1995, 6.

## V. AFTERTHOUGHT

A couple of thoughts have given rise throughout my research, yet reach beyond the scope of this paper. These thoughts deserve studious reflection and are very much worthy of research in their own right. Furthermore, their pursuit may help future commanders better understand the art of military leadership at all levels.

First, leadership traits and principles are universal. They apply equally to IBM, Motorola, Toyota, and the military. They must be applied at all levels of an organization--strategic or senior leadership, operational or middle leadership, and tactical or supervisory leadership. Issues like moral and physical courage, taking care of your people, communication, competence, and so on are germane to any organization. It is, then, an art in how these traits and principles are applied with regard to the mission, the people, the leader, and the environment.

Other thoughts seem to navigate around the perceived competition between combat and staff leadership. Are the leadership traits and principles the same or are they different? Are they transferable? Does the fact that someone is a good combat leader necessarily mean he will be a good staff leader? Will a good staff leader make a good combat leader? The Naval War College recently held a one hour discussion on this very subject. Very little was definitively settled on the issue. However, it was generally agreed upon that leadership is situation dependent. Specifically, the leader must vary his leadership style depending on the mission and the environment in which he operates.

An historical illustration of this is seen in comparing General "Hap" Arnold and General "Tooe" Spaatz during the World War II era. General Arnold was appointed Chief of the Air Corps in 1938 and following the reorganization within the War Department in February 1942

became the Commanding General of the Army Air Corps (renamed the Army Air Forces a month later).<sup>48</sup> General Spaatz, meanwhile, was the commander of the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe. While both pioneered the advent of air power and were vital contributors to the birth of an independent air force, it has been suggested that Arnold would not have fared as well as General Spaatz in Europe, nor would Spaatz have done well in Washington. Spaatz's "calling" was combat command, while Arnold's was Air Staff leadership. These two forms of leadership are very different by nature--the mission and the environment. Hence the leadership styles must be subsequently different and certain leadership traits and principles, although very much the same, require different emphasis.<sup>49</sup>

A final thought is derived from our current military culture; a culture founded in a loss of focus, enormous cutbacks, high operations tempo, and smugness (overly proud of being the best). The times dictate a call for high personal and performance standards, and the enforcement of discipline which can only be motivated by superior leadership, at all levels.<sup>50</sup> Although often overlooked in an operational setting because of the unique demands, operational leadership can and must demand no less.

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<sup>48</sup> Puryear, 29, 34-35.

<sup>49</sup> Richard H. Kohn & Joseph P. Harahan, ed., "Discussion" Air Leadership (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1986), 48.

<sup>50</sup> Dennis M. Drew, "Wanted: Leaders with a vision," Air Force Times, November 20, 1995, 54.

## **VI. APPENDIX A. EPILOGUE: Spaatz, A WWII Leadership Marker**

“As Chief of the Air Corps Plans Section and, beginning in 1941, as first Chief of the Air Staff, Spaatz helped prepare the United States for war by overseeing an unprecedented buildup of military air capability. As commander of the Eighth Air Force, he expanded and maintained a network of bases from which his bombers could strike at Germany from England. As General Eisenhower’s adviser and Commander of the Northwest African Air Forces, he reorganized and vastly improved dispersed and difficult-to-supply Allied air activities. After assuming command of all U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe, he controlled the American contribution to the Combined Bomber Offensive.”

“Spaatz’s forces destroyed the Luftwaffe, first by employing the new long-range fighters in vigorous counter-air actions and then, when the Luftwaffe assiduously avoided further engagements, by forcing it to fight to defend the petroleum industry that fueled it. Only after a protracted debate concerning which targets--oil or transportation--were to receive top priority did he win the right from skeptical Allied principals to mount strategic bombing missions against German oil production facilities. With the Luftwaffe effectively paralyzed, Spaatz moved against bridges, ports, railyards, and roads and, finally, crushed the Nazi war economy.”

“The Anglo-American partnership, although triumphant in the end, was not easy. Its lines of authority were frequently and hotly debated....[Through it all,] Spaatz maneuvered adroitly to achieve his broad military objectives.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Foreword by Richard P. Hallion. Davis, v.

## VII. APPENDIX B. AUTOBIOGRAPHY: General Carl "Tooey" Spaatz

General Carl Andrew Spaatz  
(1891-1974)

Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force

Born in Boyertown, Pennsylvania; graduated from Military Academy (1914); commissioned in the infantry; Schofield Barracks (1914-15); aviation school, San Diego (1915-16); 1<sup>st</sup> aero squadron (punitive expedition, Mexico) and 3<sup>d</sup> aero squadron, San Antonio (1916-17); 31<sup>st</sup> aero squadron, American aviation school, and 2<sup>d</sup> pursuit group, France (1917-18); assistant air service officer, Western Department, California and Texas (1919-20); Kelly Air Field (1920-21); air officer, 8<sup>th</sup> Corps Area (1920); 1<sup>st</sup> pursuit group, Ellington and Selfridge Fields 1921-24); Air Corps Tactical School, Langley Field (1924-25); office of the chief of the Air Corps (1925-29); commanded refueling flight near Los Angeles for 150 hours, 40 minutes, and 15 seconds (1929); Rockwell and March Fields (1929-33); chief of training and operations (1933-35); Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth (1935); Langley Field (1936-39); assistant executive to chief of the Air Corps (1939); special military observer, England (1940); chief, plans division, and chief, air staff, Army Air Forces (1940-42); Army Air Force Combat Command (1940); 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force; Army Air Forces, European Theater; 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force; Northwest African Air Force; Mediterranean Allied Air Forces; U.S. Strategic Air Forces, Europe (1942-44); Air Force Headquarters; U.S. Strategic Air Forces, Pacific; attended surrenders at Rheims, Berlin, and Tokyo (1945); Commander of Army Air Forces (1946-47), and subsequently the first Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force (1947-48); died at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> As recorded in "Of Chiefs and Chairman" Joint Force Quarterly (Summer 95): 110.

## VIII. APPENDIX C. GLOSSARY

### LEADERSHIP

- The art of influencing and directing people to accomplish the mission. (AFP 35-49)
- The process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, direction, and motivation. (FM 22-100)
- The capacity and the will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which will inspire confidence. (Field-Marshal Montgomery, *The Path to Leadership*)
- The art of imposing one's will upon others in such a manner as to command their obedience, their confidence, their respect, and their loyal cooperation. (U.S. Military Academy, Department of Tactics: *Leadership*, 1925)

### OPERATIONAL ART

- The employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, integration, and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations, and battles. Operational art translates the joint force commander's strategy into operational design, and ultimately, tactical action, by integrating the key activities of all levels of war. (Joint Pub 3-0,1-02)
- Occupies an intermediate position between strategy and tactics. It is principally concerned with both *theoretical* and *practical* aspects of planning, preparing, conducting, and sustaining, major operations and campaigns aimed to accomplish operational or strategic objectives in a given theater. (NWC 4025 glossary)
- The employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design, organization, integration, and execution of battles and engagements into campaigns and major operations. In war, operational art determines when, where, and for what purpose major forces will fight over time. (FM 100-5)

### OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- The art of indirect influence and the skill of putting units and soldiers together in a positive action-oriented manner to create the conditions for success. (Werner W. Banish, *"Leadership at the Operational Level"*)

### OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR

- The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure the logistic and administrative support of the tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives. (Joint Pub 3-0,1-02)
- This level is concerned with employing military forces in a theater of war or theater of operations to obtain an advantage over the enemy and thereby attain strategic military goals through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations. (AFM 1-1)

### SIMULTANEOUS OPERATIONS

- Lateral distribution forces across a generally continuous front in the theater of operations. This led to the need to synchronize the simultaneous but distributed actions of forces across the breadth of a theater. (Schneider, *"The Loose Marble--and the Origins of Operational Art"*)

### SUCCESSIVE OPERATIONS

- The expansion of the concentrated forces in a theater, in length and in depth, meant that the campaign could no longer be decided by one decisive action. (Schneider, *"The Loose Marble--and the Origins of Operational Art"*)



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